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Technology Making LASIK Safer for Those who have had Previous Eye Surgery

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More Than 90 Percent of Patients Seeing Improvement Following Previously Unsatisfactory Procedures

LAS VEGAS – Rapidly improving technology is making LASIK safer, as well as widening the scope of its potential benefits, according to A. John Kanellopoulos, MD, who taught an instructional course today at the American Academy of Ophthalmology's 2006 Joint Meeting.

During the course titled "LASIK in Eyes Following Previous Surgery: A Practical Approach to Indications, Technique and Possible Complications and their Management," Dr. Kanellopoulos, who was joined by Gregory Pamel, MD and Eric D. Donnenfeld, MD, said that LASIK technology has significantly improved in the past five years.

"We are seeing that we are able to help many more people who have had a poor outcome from a previous common LASIK procedure to correct myopia, hyperopia or astigmatism," he said. "In fact, the rate of success for vision improvement in those patients is better than 90 percent."

Additionally, Dr. Kanellopoulos said LASIK is being used as a treatment for those who have had serious ocular procedures.

"We have gotten to the point that those who have had serious ocular surgery, such as incisional keratotomy, cataract removal or penetrating keratoplasty [PKP], are now able to consider LASIK as an option for visual rehabilitation," he said. "This holds a lot of promise for those whose last resort was corneal transplantation."

Technology Improving Results

According to Kanellopoulos, the two main areas of improvement have been in the delivery of the procedure and in diagnosing a patient's vision problems.

"Laser systems have become much more sophisticated in treating details," he said. "Diagnostic abilities have also significantly improved; we have a much better understanding why a person is having vision issues."

According to Dr. Kanellopoulos, the most important diagnostic tools are:

- Wavefront analyzers, which provide information on how the eye works as an optical system and significantly helps improve night vision
- Topographic analyzers, which give detailed views of the cornea, the clear tissue at the front of the eye that covers the iris and pupil and focuses light rays entering the eye

These advances should bring peace of mind to both patients and doctors, he said.

"Emerging technology should be a great comfort for patients considering LASIK for common disorders or for more serious ocular issues," he said. "Doctors can be confident knowing that they have a reliable tool that can improve the quality of life for their patients."

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